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## RESEARCHING EMPLOYERS

Do you want to stand out from other job seekers and find job opportunities that you never might have found otherwise? Doing research on potential employers is a great way to lay the foundation for a successful job search.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RESEARCH EMPLOYERS?

- Doing research can be an effective means of developing a list of prospective employers when searching for a job or internship.
- Learning about an organization will give you a better sense of whether it is a good fit for your professional development.
- Researching employers can lead to a better resume and cover letter. You may learn about the organization's mission and values, and can highlight your skills and talents accordingly. Also, you can show a personal interest in the organization, which is significant in demonstrating your fit with the organization's needs.
- Having knowledge of an organization will lead to a more effective interview. You will be able to respond to questions in a way that demonstrates a good fit between your background and the company's needs. In addition, you will be able to ask focused questions that can fill in the gaps in your research about the organization.

### HOW DO I LOCATE INFORMATION ABOUT EMPLOYERS?

- **Web Search** – A good place to begin is an organization's website. You can find information on the organization's mission, history, location, employees, and current job postings. More information can also be found on other websites and job related search engines, such as Career Search (see reverse side).
- **Newspaper and Magazine Articles** – Large companies may have articles written about them in newspapers and magazines such as Business Week and Forbes. For smaller organizations, research local newspapers, which are often available online.
- **Career Fairs** – An organization's representative at a career fair can be a valuable resource. Prepare questions in advance and take company literature to review.
- **Personal Contacts and Networking** – If you have a professional colleague, classmate, friend, or family member who works for the organization of interest, learn about the company through him or her. If you do not have immediate contact with someone who works for the organization, ask your immediate contacts if they know anyone who does. Or, you can check with resources such as professors, neighbors, or members of your religious organization. Also, consider taking advantage of the Goucher Alumnae/i Information Network (GAIN), a group of volunteers who are available to share information on different career fields, geographic areas, and other job searching information. To request a GAIN list, contact the alumnae/i office at 410-337-6180.
- **Professional Associations** – Investigate organizations through the industry's professional association. You should also consider attending professional conferences and association meetings to do more extensive research.
- **Employer Directories** – Hundreds of business directories are published each year. They usually contain information such as headquarter information, top executives, major product lines, number of employees, and annual sales.
- **Informational Interviewing** – Contact employers by email, mail, or phone and ask for 15-20 minutes of their time to talk with them about their organization.

### WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER WHEN CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON COMPANIES?

- **Company Size and Climate** – Some people have a strong preference about working for a large or a small organization. While a large organization may offer higher salaries and a greater variety of opportunities, a small organization may offer more hands-on experience and opportunity for promotion. The organizations' climate can vary as well. Do you thrive in a competitive atmosphere? Do you prefer a team-oriented environment or one that encourages independent work? Researching company size and climate will help to ensure a good fit for your needs.

- **Company History** – Investigate when the organization was founded, major events that shaped their history, and roles that founding members may play in the organization.
- **Reputation** – How does this company rank within the industry? Are they known for solid, high-quality work? It is important to get a sense of how a company is perceived by others within the marketplace.
- **Future Outlook and Financial Condition** – Does the company seem to have a history of solid financial earnings? Do they seem to have a solid vision for the future?
- **Facilities** – You may want to also consider the age and size of the company’s facilities. While some organizations believe that their physical environment and working conditions are important, others believe it is unrelated to effective functioning. Consider if you would be comfortable working in their facilities.
- **Location** – Are you willing to move? Relocating can often lead to higher salaries and more opportunities. Larger companies often have various locations throughout the country and will relocate their employees. However, it is important to consider if you will enjoy living in the location of your new job. In considering a new area, you may want to investigate aspects such as weather, culture and entertainment, population, and estimated cost of living. Read the city’s newspaper and/or website. Finally, it is important to visit the city or town prior to accepting a job offer.
- **Salary** – Does the organization offer competitive salaries for its industry? Research an organization’s salary offers and compare them to similar organizations. You can do this by finding the salary range from similar positions advertised in the past year.
- **Ownership**- Is the company public, private, foreign owned or nonprofit?

## WHERE SHOULD I GO TO GET STARTED?

Here are a few examples of resources available in the Career Development Office library:

- *Researching Your Way to a Good Job* by Karmen N.T. Crowther
- *The 100 Best Non-Profits to Work For* by Leslie Hamilton and Robert Tragert
- Peterson’s *Hidden Job Market*
- *Going Global: Country Career Guide* by Mary Ann Thompson
- *The Grey House Performing Arts Directory*
- The *Job Bank* Series, organized geographically
- *The Book of Lists*, produced by the Baltimore Business Journal

The following websites are filled with information about industries and organizations:

- CDO Website: [www.goucher.edu/cdo](http://www.goucher.edu/cdo)
  - Check the links for eRecruiting and Career Search.
- Bloomberg: [www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com)
- Forbes Lists:
  - Forbes 500: <http://www.forbes.com/2002/03/27/forbes500.html>
  - Forbes Best Small Companies: <http://www.forbes.com/2003/10/08/200bestland.html>
  - Forbes Largest Private Companies: <http://www.forbes.com/2002/11/07/privateland.html>
- Fortune Global 500: <http://www.fortune.com/fortune/global500>
- Hoovers: [www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com)
- Idealist- Action Without Border: [www.idealist.com](http://www.idealist.com)
- JobWeb- Career Development and Job Search Advice for New College Graduates: [www.jobweb.com](http://www.jobweb.com)
- JobWeb’s Employer Directory: <http://www.jobweb.com/employ/fairs/default.asp>
- Monster Trak: [www.monstertrak.com](http://www.monstertrak.com)
- Riley Guide: [www.rileyguide.com](http://www.rileyguide.com)
- Standard & Poor’s Index Services: <http://www2.standardandpoors.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=sp/Page/HomePg>
- Vault: [www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)
- Wall Street Journal online: [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com)
- WetFeet: [www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com)